

# URBAN AGENDA FOR THE EU



## Cities of Equality Partnership

### Orientation Paper

September 2024





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## Table of acronyms

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Full Name in English</b>
DGUM	Directors General on Urban Matters
EAA	Ex-Ante assessment
EUI	European Urban Initiative
UAEU	Urban Agenda for the EU
UDG	Urban Development Group
UATPG	Urban Agenda Technical Preparatory Group

# Definitions

An **Orientation Paper** is a document that narrows down the thematic scope of the Partnership and defines its objectives, considering the mandate (of the partner organisations), knowledge (available) and resources (available) of the members of the partnership.

## General definitions

**Thematic focus** is the scope of the partnership presenting the areas of focus and list of topics partners will work on.

**Cross cutting issues** represent key aspects to be considered in the overall work of the Urban Agenda for the EU and its Partnerships. Each Partnership shall therefore consider the relevance of the Cross-cutting Issues (Gijon Agreement clause 5). The Cross-cutting issues are:

- Promoting urban policy for the common good, inclusiveness, accessibility, security and equality.
- Enhancing integrated and innovative approaches, notably through financing and in correlation to the green, digital and just transitions.
  - a) Supporting effective urban governance, participation, and co-creation.
  - b) Promoting multi-level governance and cooperation across administrative boundaries.
  - c) Harmonising measures at different spatial levels and implementing place-based policies and strategies.
  - d) Supporting sound and strategic sustainable urban planning, and balanced territorial development.
  - e) Contributing to the acceleration of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda SDGs, the New Urban Agenda and Habitat III principles.

**Synergies** are thematic links and connections with other Thematic Partnerships and possible collaborations can be established with other Partnerships on common areas of interest/actions.

**Working group leader** is the coordinator of a specific working group with the responsibility of managing, coordinating, supervising the work of the other group members.

**Capacity for implementation** is the Partnership's ability to work on the selected topics of interest by having the skills/knowledge, the human and financial resources, and the political mandate needed to further explore and build actions on the identified areas of focus.

**Timeline** means a graphical representation of a period of time, on which important events are marked.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Context

The Union of Equality, launched in 2021 by the European Commission, introduced an important initiative that focuses on mainstreaming equality at the EU and Member State level. Today, as demonstrated in the Ex-Ante Assessment report, there is still a lot of work to be done to strengthen the urban dimension of this initiative. This is where the UAEU "Cities of Equality" Partnership can bring added value.

The primary focus of the "Cities of Equality" Partnership is addressing specific issues related to equity and equality within cities. Cities that successfully and proactively foster environments of equality are those that take into account the diverse needs of all individuals and social groups. They plan and provide equal opportunities for everyone, ensuring that no one is left behind.

In order to achieve this ambition whilst creating the environments for equality, it is necessary to employ both targeted interventions that specifically benefit marginalised groups and holistic thinking that aims to ensure cities work for everyone. The principle of intersectionality, which acknowledges the overlapping and interconnected nature of various forms of discrimination and disadvantage, will be essential in this endeavour. By considering the unique challenges faced by different individuals and communities, the Thematic Partnership can strive for comprehensive and inclusive approaches towards achieving equality within cities.

## 1.2 Governance of the Partnership

The Cities of Equality Partnership includes partners representing 2 national authorities, 5 metropolitan and urban authorities, 4 umbrella and network organisations, 9 European institutions.

### 1.2.1 Coordinators of the Partnership

The Partnership is jointly coordinated by the French National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (ANCT) and the Metropolitan City of Rome.

### 1.2.2 Members of the Partnership

The following organisations and institutions are members of the Partnership:

- National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (ANCT), France (coordinator)
- Metropolitan City of Rome Capital, Italy (coordinator)
- Austria Tech / Driving Urban Transitions Partnership (DUT Partnership), Austria
- Konin Agglomeration Association, Poland
- Municipality of Varna, Bulgaria
- Municipality of Heerenveen, Netherlands
- Birzai District Municipality Administration, Lithuania
- Eurocities, Belgium
- ICLEI European Secretariat, Germany
- Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), Belgium
- UniverCities, Italy
- European Commission Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO)
- European Commission Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM)

- European Commission Directorate-General for Energy (DG ENER)
- European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC)
- European Commission Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST)
- European Commission DG Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD)
- European Commission DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL)
- European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC)

### 1.2.3 Orientation Paper process and timeline

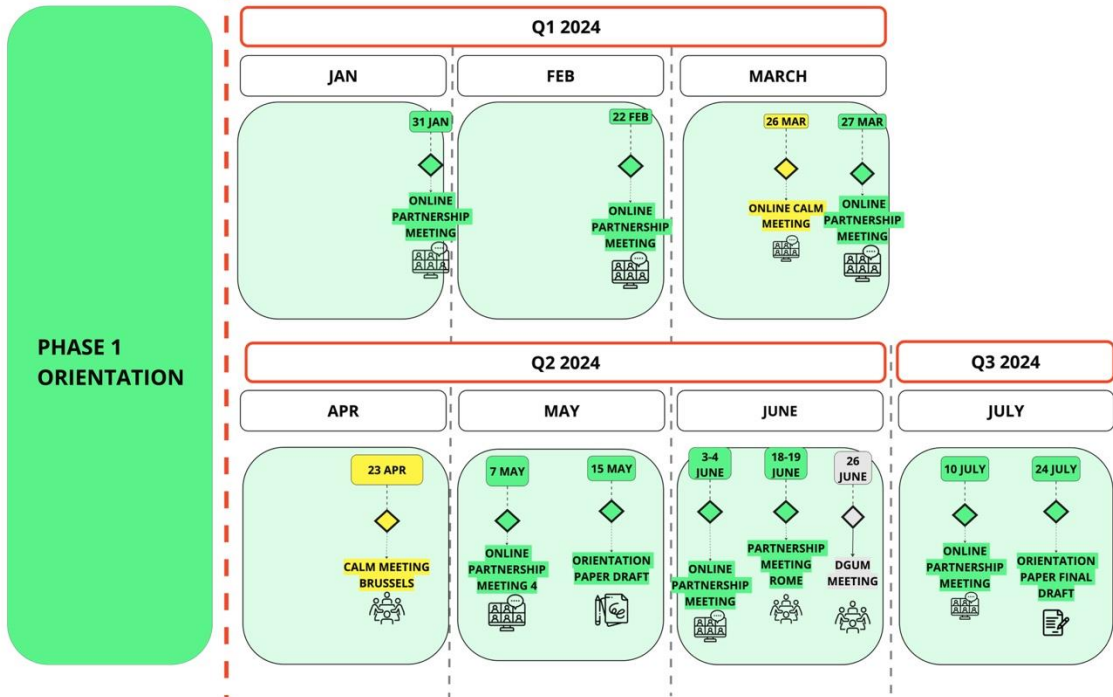
The Cities of Equality Partnership drafted the Orientation Paper through a comprehensive and inclusive process. Monthly online meetings were held, and an online survey was conducted to gather feedback from all members ensuring a collaborative approach to the selection of topics and challenges to be addressed by the partnership (see Section 4).

The Ex-Ante Assessment was thoroughly analysed to build on its analysis and recommendations. Additionally, a thorough review of the most recent policy documents and initiatives was conducted to align the goals of the Partnership with current best practices and legislative frameworks. The process also included mapping existing initiatives and projects in the field of equality, providing a clear overview of ongoing efforts and identifying gaps.

During the Orientation phase, the Partnership held the following meetings:

- 31 January 2024 (Online Partnership Meeting)
- 22 February 2024 (Online Partnership Meeting)
- 27 March 2024 (Online Partnership Meeting)
- 23 April (Coordinators and Action Leaders Meeting, Brussels)
- 7 May 2024 (Online Partnership Meeting)
- 3-4 June (Online Partnership Meeting - thematic working groups)
- 18-19 June 2024 (In-Person Partnership Meeting, Rome)
- 3 July 2024 (thematic working group meetings)
- 10 July (Online Partnership Meeting)

**Cities of Equality Partnership Launch**  
**31 January 2024**



*Timeline of activities in the Orientation Phase (January – July 2024)*

## 2. STRATEGIC GOALS AND VISION, GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The theme of the Cities of Equality partnership is strongly aligned with some of the European Union's headline priorities, especially the European Commission Work Programme 2023, the Union of Equality initiative, and the Cohesion Policy 2021-2027.

Equality is a core value of the European Union, enshrined in the Treaties (articles 8 and 10). In 2019, the European Commission President von der Leyen made "equality for all and equality in all of its senses" one of the major priorities in her political guidelines of the Commission. Under her presidency, the first ever Commissioner for Equality, Helena Dalli, was appointed.

The European Convention on Human Rights protects people from discrimination, including discrimination based on ethnicity, gender or sexuality, the right to equality is protected and this has an impact at national and European level.

The European Commission has adopted several strategies for equality in the last few years to create the conditions for everyone to live, thrive and lead regardless of any difference.

These include:

- The European Pillar of Social Rights (2017) and the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan (2021).
- The Gender Equality Strategy, 2020-2025.
- The EU Anti-racism Action Plan, 2020-2025.
- The EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion, and participation, 2020-2030.
- The LGBTIQ Equality Strategy, 2020-2025.
- The Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2021-2030.
- The EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life, 2021-2030.
- The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the European Child Guarantee, 2021.
- The EU Strategy combating anti-Muslim hatred.

The theme of "Cities of Equality" is also aligned with four EU policy strands: Green Transition and more specifically the Just transition (European Green Deal, the Renovation Wave, Just Transition Mechanism), Urban and Territorial strand (including the New Leipzig Charter, the Pact of Amsterdam, Ljubljana Agreement, New European Bauhaus, the Territorial Agenda 2030), Social Economy strand (European Action Plan for the Social Economy, The Transition Pathway for the Proximity and Social Economy Industrial Ecosystem), and Digital Transition (European Digital Strategy) put forward by the Explorative Proposal and the linking matrix in 2021.

The theme of equality is strongly aligned with the goals and objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda. In addition, a strong interest in addressing the comprehensive set of urban (and transitions-related) policy themes through the lens of equality has been expressed at the national level through the feedback provided by Directors-General on Urban Matters (DGUM).

While equality (incl. inclusion, fairness, and justice) has been highlighted and included as a vital cross-cutting issue in most contemporary international, EU and Member State policies across themes, the key challenge remains designing concrete strategies to achieve equality at the local level adopting an intersectional approach.



Also, there is little information on the policies' implementation and their results, especially at the city level. These challenges present an opportunity for the partnership and a clear justification for its launch.

In this context, the Cities of Equality Partnership will bring together representatives of the EU institutions, member states, cities and other stakeholders to bring about better regulation, funding and knowledge for urban equality. The Partnership will do so by focussing on the two topics described in Section 2, working at the intersection of inclusive urban planning and social inclusion. The Cities of Equality Partnership will work to strength the urban dimension of EU-level regulation and policies, such as cohesion funds and equality strategies, and increase the engagement of all citizens in the design of local services and in public life. Moreover, the Partnership will explore an intersectional and human-centred approach to policymaking with a view to avoid negative externalities that could worsen social and spatial inequalities. To achieve its objectives, the Partnership will rely on the competences and expertise of its members and engage with key stakeholders at the EU, national and local level.

## 3. THEMATIC FOCUS

The table below presents an overview of the topics the Cities of Equality Partnership will address.

	Topic	Short description	Indicated in the EAA
1	Tackling spatial segregation at city and neighbourhood level	The result of three themes addressed in the EAA, namely the fight against spatial segregation and the inequalities that stem from it, particularly in terms of environmental justice and access to and quality of public and green spaces and services for the marginalised populations.	Strongly
2	Engaging communities for fair and open access to services in a meaningful democracy	It is the result of merging two sub-topics of the policy domain "Social inclusions, including institutions for equality at the city level", as provided by the EAA: "Access to services" and "Democracy, elections and participation in local life". It is expected to help create a vibrant and well-functioning democracy that innovatively addresses citizens' needs for equitable engagement and recognition.	Partially

### 3.1 Tackling spatial segregation at city and neighbourhood level

According to the Ex-Ante Assessment, spatial segregation can be defined as "a social division of cities according to three criteria in particular: life cycle, socio-economic situation and ethnic component." The Cities of Equality Partnership will work both on expanding the knowledge of the state of such segregation and social division within cities and explore ways to actively reduce it.

Moreover, the fight against spatial segregation has been expressly recognised as an ambition in the "European Union's Inclusive urban planning, renewal and supply of urban infrastructure at the city level policy". The spatial segregation has also been recognised as an issue in the knowledge of the housing market and data more generally. Policies at the EU, national and local level should also ensure greater availability and accessibility to local public services.

#### 3.1.1 Specific problems to be addressed

- Spatial and social segregation at city level: segregation mechanisms tend to intensify in cities, particularly large ones. The social, urban and economic gap between affluent neighbourhoods and those housing the most marginalised groups is becoming ever more pronounced. The objective would be to develop urban areas with different social, economic and ethnic backgrounds, working for a better integration of different

marginalised communities, promoting social cohesion and avoiding social, spatial and racial segregation.

- Data bias: Data bias is a major challenge because incomplete or biased data can lead to incorrect planning decisions. Developing methods to detect and correct such biases is crucial to ensure fair and effective urban planning. This includes the validation and adaptation of data and the integration of different data sources. It will also be important to involve citizens and residents in the collection methods, particularly through transdisciplinary collection methods (cf. Self and community survey methods by Margot Haas Wormser and Claire Selltiz. Concept taken over by Torre and Fine, 2011). Another relevant challenge relates to data bias and availability when it comes to marginalised groups and in complying with national and local anti-discrimination policies and approaches when carrying out such data collection actions.
- Competences and cooperation in multilevel and integrated approach within local authorities and other level of governance are needed.
- Policy fragmentation at the national and local level when it comes to policies tackling spatial segregation: lack of an integrated policy approach to social segregation due to the lack of cooperation between different layers of governments and within the cities' administrations departments.
- Spatial segregation and negative externalities: policies that try to tackle spatial segregation often lead to negative externalities such as gentrification, social isolation, unequal distribution of resources and limited access to education, health care and employment opportunities. It is important to identify these effects and mitigate them through targeted policies. It is also important to raise the question of environmental justice, which is intimately linked to the issues of social and spatial segregation that generate environmental inequalities such as access to green areas and worst impact of all kinds of pollutions on the inhabitants of some communities.
- Availability of data at the neighbourhood level: it would be useful to provide process support and toolkits to territories to develop the following aspects: importance of detailed data (understanding the specific needs and challenges in different neighbourhoods and basis for targeted and needs-based planning and interventions); methods of geoinformatics and spatial analysis; better targeting planning and intervention; better participation and transparency. The issue of the competencies to compare data and influence on adapting policies is also relevant.

### 3.1.2 Relevance to the three pillars

This section explores the potential objectives that the Partnership could pursue in relation to the three pillars of the Urban Agenda for the EU: Better Knowledge, Better Regulation and Better Funding.

#### *Better regulation*

- Implementing equality strategies at the local level and follow up EU ones. In fact, most EU equality strategies are coming to an end in 2025 so it might be appropriate to better involve local authorities and to address spatial segregation by developing and enforcing regulations that promote socially mixed neighborhoods and prevent discriminatory housing practices. It might be also the right timing to reflect clear guidelines for urban planning that encourage inclusive development and reduce spatial inequalities and continuous monitoring and evaluation progress.
- Integrate the evidence from the current partnership within the European Semester process, and notably within the Social Convergence Framework (SCF) to better steer Member States policies in the field

#### *Better knowledge*

- Data collection and processing on marginalised groups and spatial inequalities by improving methods for gathering fine-grained spatial data at the neighbourhood level

to obtaining an accurate picture of spatial inequalities and the situation of marginalised groups, developing standardized metrics for measuring segregation across different scales and creating tools for visualizing and analysing segregation patterns and formation to modern technologies and analysis methods such as GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and big data analysis.

#### *Better funding*

- Stronger urban dimension of the European Social Fund+ (ESF+), including exploring the possibility of urban earmarking, to better promote social mixing in the cities but also a better integration between ESF+ and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to better integrate a place and people-based approach. This could involve specific funding to improve access to quality housing for marginalised groups, providing financial incentives for cities to implement desegregation strategies and inclusive urban planning and funding capacity-building programs for local authorities to better understand and address spatial segregation issues as well as harmonising project and reporting deadlines for the two funds. It is a crucial phase to nourish the current reflections on Cohesion policy funds and how to better implement an integrated approach and combine social and infrastructure dimensions.

### **3.1.3 Expected impact or outcome**

- Better and unbiased policymaking (with an impact on equality) during the elaboration of policies taking into account the consequences on equality could avoid biased policies with negative externality on people and inhabitants.
- Stronger social dimension in urban planning in particular by defining and introducing a human-centred approach.
- Better process and collect data on marginalised groups (by developing methods of collection and processing and by implementing transparent and ethically responsible data processing procedures).
- Co-design and co-govern public spaces.

### **3.1.4 Relevance for EU policy goals**

Local actions must be consistent with the overarching objectives of the EU in order to ensure coherent and coordinated development within the Union. In particular, the policy areas that are most relevant for this topic include Cohesion Policy and the EU Commission's Equality strategies.

#### Cohesion policy:

- Reducing social and economic disparities: EU cohesion policy aims to reduce social, economic and territorial disparities. The European Pillar of Social Rights guides the social investments under cohesion policy. By supporting these objectives, local actions contribute to the achievement of these overarching EU goals.
- Promoting equal opportunities and reducing discrimination: The EU equality strategies that built together the Union of Equality promote equal opportunities and work to reduce discrimination. Local actions aimed at making public spaces more inclusive and supporting the inclusion of marginalised groups directly support these strategies.
- Financial support and resources: By linking with EU policies, local authorities can access funding and resources that are crucial to implementing their policies to promote socially mixed and inclusive cities and improve data collection on marginalised groups.

Equality strategies: Equality strategies could strengthen its synergies with EU funds, reinforce their goals towards stronger local strategies, better take into account the need of equality based on the person but also places that could have impact on equality.

## 3.2 Engaging communities for fair and open access to services in meaningful democracy

In a meaningful democracy, citizen participation enables all social groups to be part of public life. In principle, regardless of socio-economic status and other conditions of disadvantage or social differentiation, everyone should have the opportunity to engage in public affairs. In practice, the parity of participation is challenging to achieve, particularly so in highly unequal societies and contexts. Citizen engagement processes can empower citizens and inhabitants, not only by enabling them to be active participants in public life on their own terms, but also by improving public services and access to them.

Within the 'Social Inclusion, including institutions for equality at the city level' policy domain, the two key sub-themes 'Access to Services' and 'Democracy, Elections, and Local Participation' share a common foundation: codesign. Co-design involves collaboration between institutions and civil society to offer tailor-made services that benefit the community, for instance the 'Metropolitan Table of Coexistence' by the Metropolitan City of Rome Capital and the 'Advisory Councils' in the Municipality of Heerenveen.

Moreover, according to the partners, it is also appropriate to include in the aforementioned policy domain the following two sub-themes: (1) 'Inclusive labour markets' (originally belonging to 'Economic inclusion and equal economic opportunities at city level') and (2) 'Environmental justice' (originally belonging to 'Green Transition').

With reference to the above, inclusion of diverse social groups in democratic processes has also arisen as an important concern in relation to the question of 'climate justice'. This, in order to ensure that costs and benefits of the climate transition are equitably distributed across society. Municipalities that have focused on making climate actions and their implementation more socially equitable have taken the following into consideration: (1) redesigning the climate measures in question and/or (2) better communicating them to citizens. Yet while departments try to implement their projects in a socially equitable manner, very little guidance is provided in this regard. Many with a background in pure environmental and climate concerns are thus being confronted with an entirely new series of (additional) priorities to consider.

In conclusion, it can be stated that civil society engagement in decision-making processes and inclusive policies is crucial for accessing unheard voices and thus building trust in government and democracy, but it also requires trust as a solid basis for its design and implementation.

Below are the main issues and challenges that the Cities of Equality Partnership recognised as priorities, and the potential declination into objectives according to the three pillars of the Urban Agenda for the EU (Better Regulation, Better Knowledge, Better Funding).

### 3.2.1 Specific problems to be addressed

- Unequal civic and political participation of all social groups on local social, economic and environmental matters.
- Limited co-designing processes in local services and policies. For instance, applying European sustainability frameworks on a local level limits abilities to fairly distribute benefits and burdens/costs according to residents' needs and capacities.
- Accessibility biases in local services (health, education, skills training, transport, sustainability initiatives, greenspace, participation in local life etc.) stemming from socio-economic status, geographical location, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, etc.
- Ineffective anti-discrimination policies (i.e. diversity and inclusion within institutions).

- Insufficient funding and support for implementation of key European sustainability and justice frameworks at the local level - especially detrimental to those least able to withstand increased costs of sustainability transitions.
- Risk that environmental policies are not both environmentally sustainable and socially equitable, with the result that not all communities may benefit equally from environmental protection measures and that different social groups may be disproportionately affected by environmental impacts.

### 3.2.2 Relevance to the three pillars

This section explores the potential objectives that the Partnership could pursue in relation to the three pillars of the Urban Agenda for the EU: Better Knowledge, Better Regulation and Better Funding.

Potential objectives: Better Knowledge

- Promotion of a transparent knowledge of existing laws and guidelines on participation to give everyone the actual opportunity to contribute to policymaking processes, and to fight against all forms of disinformation and fake news.
- Improvement of public awareness and education about democratic procedures and rights, and support of capacity-building initiatives within local governments to implement accessible co-design processes for environmental, social and economic services and policies.
- Enhance the quality of knowledge about inclusive participatory processes which can ultimately affect inequality within cities.
- Support to an inclusive approach to skills development and an equal access to labour market.
- Exchange and review of good practices among partners and key actors to generate evidence-based solutions that engage public authorities and stakeholders in all aspects of local political life and promote an enabling environment for citizen participation.
- Creation of a toolkit including all the information resulting from the aforementioned actions.

Potential objectives: Better Regulation

- Implementation of the available regulation/strategies at the EU level.
- Creation of mechanisms for citizen engagement in policymaking and governance processes at the local level, while including an intersectional approach in the strategic and practical level of policymaking.
- Strengthening of local electoral laws and regulations, to guarantee everyone the possibility of exercising their active and passive voting rights.
- Insights on (need for) improved multi-level governance approaches, giving local governments more opportunities to shape transposition of EU sustainability and social regulations.

Potential objectives: Better Funding

- Accessible information about funding and finance at the EU level in the specific areas of provision of access to services, overcoming inequality and addressing which specific marginalised groups, as well as in the field of participatory democracy.
- Developing innovative financing mechanisms and tools, ensuring that they address the financing obstacles, and proposing solutions to overcome access to funding and to support grassroots initiatives that promote equality and environmental justice at the local level.
- Implementing a mechanism for the EU to analyse member states' opportunities in social inclusion projects.



- Fostering greater synergies between the ERDF place-based approach and the ESF+ which lacks a strong territorial dimension.
- Specialised funding instruments to support national integration policies are based on the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the European Social Fund (ESF+).
- Ensuring funding for civil society organisations and for local governments to deliver essential services.
- Supporting civil society organisations and grassroots movements working to promote democracy and civic participation.
- Allocating funding/resources for voter education programmes, especially to marginalised groups.
- Increasing funding allocation for equality initiatives within city budgets.
- Establishing public-private partnerships to leverage additional funding sources for equality projects.

### 3.2.3 Expected impact or outcome

By implementing the objectives within the framework of Better Knowledge, Better Regulation and Better Funding, it is expected to have a sustainable, inclusive and strong impact on fostering equality in cities. This approach will also help create a vibrant and well-functioning democracy that innovatively addresses citizens' needs for engagement and recognition and strengthening the EU democracy through actions at local level.

We aim at improving the relationship not only between institutions and civil society but also between groups of civil society meant in all its declinations. This represents a significant shift in mentality.

- Through Better Knowledge, it is expected to improve public trust in local and regional governments through equitable governance practices and processes, enabling a political and social environment for public participation and collaborative forms of governance among public institutions and society at large.
- Through Better Regulation, it is expected to strengthen legal and policy frameworks, laying a stronger foundation for promoting equality, intersectionality and fighting discrimination. This will ensure effective enforcement mechanisms to hinder discriminatory practices, leading to a more inclusive and just environment where everyone is protected and has equal rights and opportunities. Furthermore, it will enhance representation and participation in public life, leading to in more diverse and inclusive decision-making processes.
- Through Better Funding, it is expected that increased financial resources and enhanced partnerships between stakeholders will result in more sustainable equality and inclusive programs. This will support comprehensive and well-funded initiatives and projects that improve accessibility, infrastructure, and services for all.

### 3.2.4 Relevance for EU policy goals

- The European Pillar of Social Rights (2017) and the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan (2021)
- Just transition (European Green Deal, the Renovation Wave, Just Transition Mechanism)
- Ensuring respect for the European Charter of Fundamental Rights
- The New Pact on Migration and Asylum
- Skills and Talent Mobility package and EU Talent Pool
- Action plan on Integration and Inclusion of Third-Country Nationals 2021-2027
- EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027
- EU strategy on the rights of the child (2021) and European Child Guarantee
- The "Political guidelines for the next European commission 2024–2029"

- The Commission Recommendation C(EU) 2023/2836 on promoting the engagement and effective participation of citizens and civil society organisations in public policy-making processes



## 4. SYNERGIES WITH OTHER PARTNERSHIPS

The table below situates the Cities of Equality Partnership in relation with other UAEU Thematic Partnerships, highlighting potential synergies and complementarities in the topics that have been selected.

UAEU Partnerships	Tackling spatial segregation at city and neighbourhood level	Engaging communities for fair and open access to services in a meaningful democracy
Culture and Cultural Heritage	Action 5.2: Street Invasion, Atomisation and Cultural Reactivation Action 5.3: Cultural Hubs for Innovation, Modernisation and Enhancement" (CHIME)	Action 5.5: Raise awareness for public libraries and their new tasks on a European and National Level Action 5.11: Local cultural services fostering social inclusion: Identification of cities' research needs & peer learning
Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees		Action 6.7: Towards more evidence-based policy making
Jobs and skills in the local economy	Action 3: The European Pillar on Social Rights (EPSR) as a Framework for the Reconversion Towards a Sustainable Economy Action 7: Funding Deprived Areas	Action 7: Funding Deprived Areas
Sustainable Tourism	Action 5: Destinations Accessible for All	
Urban Poverty	Action 3: Developing data on urban poverty at EU level Action 6: Cohesion Policy post 2020: Setting up a new Urban Territorial Objective Action 7: Cohesion policy post 2020: Local pact for the regeneration of urban deprived areas and neighbourhoods (UDAN) Action 11: Strengthening the desegregation principle in EU urban areas	Action 8: Ending homelessness by 2030 through the reform of social inclusion strategies at national level Action 10: Adoption of an integrated Roma framework from a multi-level governance approach Action 11: Strengthening the desegregation principle in EU urban areas

# 5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The complexity of urban challenges requires integrating different policy aspects to avoid contradictory consequences and make interventions in Urban Areas more effective (Pact of Amsterdam clause 12). Cross-cutting Issues represent key aspects to be considered in the overall work of the Urban Agenda for the EU and its Partnerships.

The Cities of Equality Partnership will therefore consider the relevance of cross-cutting issues as defined by clause 5 of the "Gijon Agreement":

- Promoting urban policy for the common good, inclusiveness, accessibility, security and equality. Enhancing integrated and innovative approaches, notably through financing and in correlation to the green, digital and just transitions.
- Supporting effective urban governance, participation, and co-creation.
- Promoting multi-level governance and cooperation across administrative boundaries.
- Harmonising measures at different spatial levels and implementing place-based policies and strategies. Supporting sound and strategic sustainable urban planning, and balanced territorial development.
- Contributing to the acceleration of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda SDGs, the New Urban Agenda and Habitat III principles.
- Promoting urban strategies and urban funding instruments based on sound analysis of the specific local situation, while following place-based development.
- Enabling endogenous urban transformations, including urban regeneration avoiding gentrification, integrating social, economic, environmental, spatial and cultural aspects, and also linked to the brownfield redevelopment with the objective of limiting greenfield consumption.
- Promoting universally accessible cities, towns and places where everyone is enabled and empowered to fully participate in the social, economic, cultural and political opportunities that these places have to offer and considering different social groups' needs.
- Integration of climate change and European Green Deal policy goals into the urban development framework and applying a "climate change lens" approach to the implementation of all development policies.

## 6. WORKING METHODS

The Cities of Equality Partnership will achieve its goals through a dynamic blend of online and offline methods to facilitate collaboration. By establishing vertical and horizontal coordination between stakeholders at the EU, MS, regional and city levels (and other stakeholders), the partnership aims to leverage diverse perspectives and expertise, ensuring a comprehensive and cohesive effort towards advancing equality in EU policies starting from the experience of local and national authorities. Partners will collaborate in two working groups, reflecting the choice of topics outlined in Section 3 “Thematic Focus”.

### 6.1 Working groups

#### 6.1.1 Inclusive urban planning

This working group is led by the French Agency for Territorial Cohesion (ANCT) and will address topics identified in the Ex-Ante Assessment as part of the “Inclusive urban planning” and “Green transition” thematic areas. The following members will contribute to this working group:

- ANCT (working group leader)
- DUT/AustriaTech
- Konin Agglomeration Association
- Eurocities
- UniverCities
- DG REGIO
- DG REFORM
- DG ENER
- DG JUST
- DG RTD
- JRC

#### 6.1.2 Engaging communities for fair and open access to services in a meaningful democracy

This working group is led by the Metropolitan City of Rome Capital and will address topics identified in the Ex-Ante Assessment as part of the “Social inclusion”, “Economic inclusion” and “Green Transition” thematic areas. The following members will contribute to this working group:

- Metropolitan City of Rome (working group leader)
- Municipality of Heerenveen
- Municipality of Varna
- Birzai District Municipality Administration
- Eurocities
- ICLEI Europe
- Council of European Municipalities and Regions
- UniverCities
- DG REGIO
- DG REFORM
- DG ENER
- DG EAC
- DG JUST

- DG RTD
- DG EMPL
- JRC

### 6.1.3 Responsibilities of coordinators and partners

In the Cities of Equality Partnership, the co-coordinators also act as working group leaders. This section summarises the responsibilities of coordinators and partners to ensure that the Partnership achieves its objectives.

The responsibilities of coordinators (and working group leaders) include:

- Providing strategic direction to the Cities of Equality Partnership.
- Organising, preparing and chairing working group meetings.
- Defining and allocating the work among working group members.
- Delivering work results according to the partnership timetable.
- Communicating and exchanging with other UAEU partnerships.

The responsibilities of partners contributing to working groups include:

- Contributing to the thematic working groups and providing feedback and comments to key deliverables.
- Actively participating in partnership meetings, engaging experts and expertise from external networks, when available and relevant, and promoting the activities of the partnership.
- Sharing knowledge and experience and generating ideas for the partnership works.
- Making available the necessary resources needed to guarantee these commitments to the partnership.

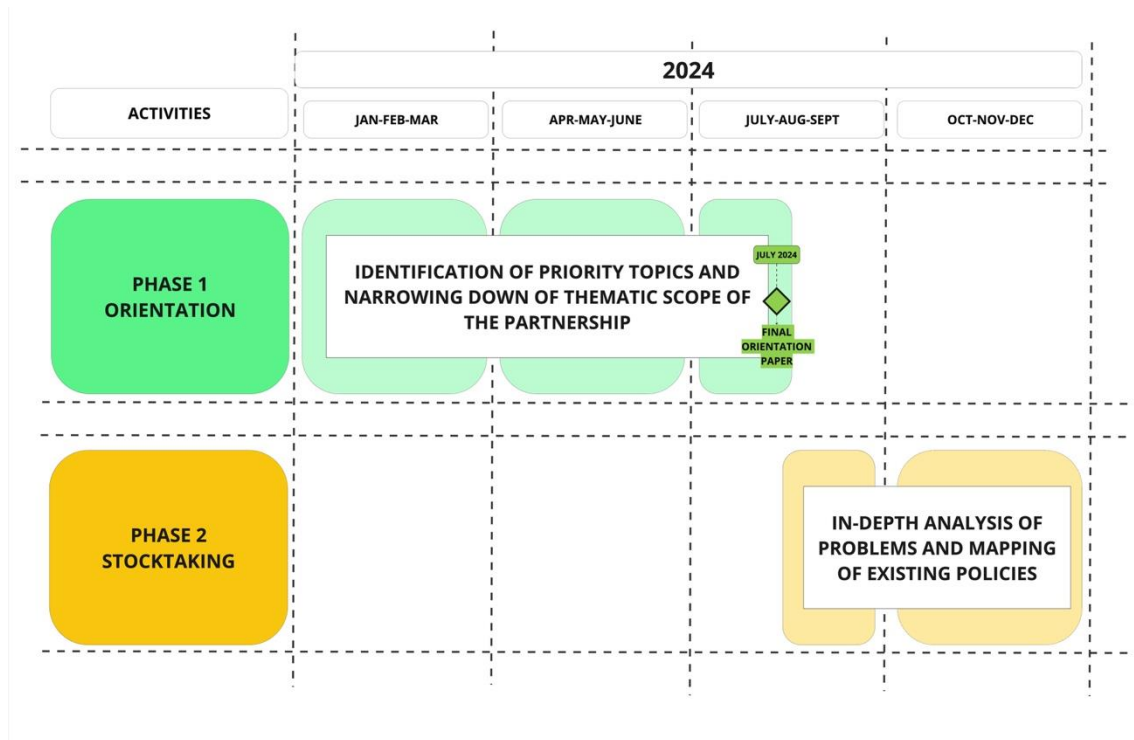
## 6.2 Main activities

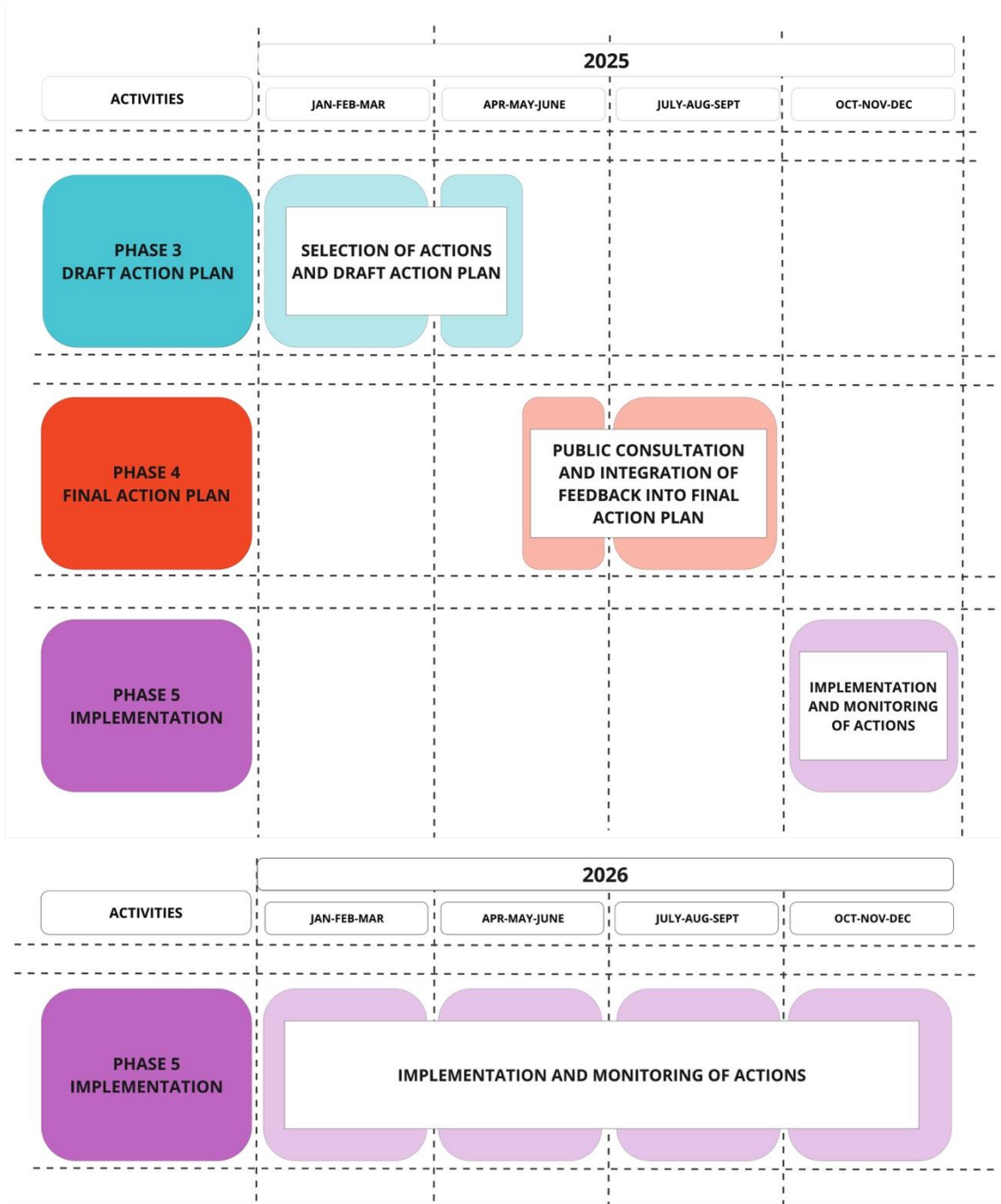
This section summarises the steps that the Cities of Equality Partnership will follow during its timeline, with a brief description of each step and phase.

- **Phase 1: Orientation.** Partners brainstorm topics and challenges based on the Ex-Ante Assessment and identify the topics they want to address, narrowing down the scope of the Partnership. In this phase, partners collaborate in online and in-person meetings and create working groups based on each partner's interests and expertise. The main output of this phase is the Orientation Paper.
- **Phase 2: Stocktaking.** The problems identified in the Orientation Phase (summarised in paragraph 3 of the current document) are analysed in depth. Partners work in groups to analyse relevant initiatives and stakeholders for each topic and start identifying potential actions. Thematic scoping fiches are the main output of this phase.
- **Phase 3: Draft Action Plan.** Partners finalise the selection of actions and draft an action plan.
- **Phase 4: Final Action Plan.** The draft action plan is submitted to public consultation. Then, the Partnership integrates the feedback to the draft action plan and produce a final version.
- **Phase 5: Implementation.** The actions included in the Action Plan are implemented, monitored and disseminated.

## 6.3 Process and timeline

*Timeline of activities of the main phases of the Partnership (January 2024 - December 2026)*





## 6.4 Rules for good cooperation

The Cities of Equality Partnership will ensure effective cooperation among local authorities, national authorities, EU institutions and external stakeholders to ensure that all partners remain actively engaged, by adhering to the following rules:

- Transparency and open communication: relevant information, such as invitations to online and in-person meeting, will be shared promptly and accurately.
- Active attendance and contribution to the Partnership's activities: each partner actively contributes to shaping the work of the Cities of Equality Partnership based on its own expertise; the Coordinators and the Thematic Partnership Officer work to ensure that each partner's voice and expertise are valued in decision-making processes.
- Respect and inclusivity will guide interactions, fostering a collaborative environment.
- Coordination and alignment of objectives will be maintained through regular updates, promoting a unified approach towards common goals.
- Accountability and mutual trust will be established through clear roles, responsibilities, and consistent follow-through on commitments. These principles will foster a robust, dynamic, and productive partnership.

